

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 1963

Genius of the Atom Bomb

Julius Robert Oppenheimer

DR. J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER, A GENIUS IN physics, was 58 years old when he was called from his university classes to lead the Manhattan project that developed the atomic bomb and brought World War II to an end. To friends and associates he was known as "Oppie"

Man during the hectic days when he was administrator, scientist and diplomat of the super-secret bomb project.

Dr. Oppenheimer wore a brown pork-pie hat in his travels between groups of scientists working on the project. Frequently the hat was hung in laboratories and offices as a symbol that he was at hand.

On Aug. 6, 1945, when the first uranium bomb pulverized Hiroshima, the War Department announced that Dr. Oppenheimer "is to be credited with achieving the implementation of atomic energy for military purposes."

Troubled by Success

Dr. Oppenheimer was among the many scientists troubled by this enormous accomplishment that had loosed such an awesome force upon mankind. Not long ago he remarked that scientists had come, because of this experience, to know sin.

Yesterday it was disclosed that Dr. Oppenheimer, now director of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J., will receive the Fermi Award, the highest honor conferred by the Atomic Energy Commission.

Dr. Oppenheimer rarely makes public appearances. At scientific meetings he speaks, with diffidence and modesty, in a low voice that does not carry far. His listeners have to strain to hear his words, which are usually illuminating.

Dr. Oppenheimer, a thin man, is 6 feet tall and has close-cropped hair. He chain-smokes cigarettes.

A Touch of the Poet

In his writing he is almost a poet, beautifully fluent. He moves gracefully. He is a scholar and well versed in eight languages.

J. Robert Oppenheimer was born in New York on April 22, 1904. His father was a well-to-do textile importer, who had come to this country from Germany at the age of 17. His mother was a Baltimore artist.

At the age of 11 he was elected to the New York Mineralogical Society. He attended Ethical Culture School here. In three years he completed a Harvard College course summa cum laude. He studied at Cambridge University in England.

At Goettingen in Germany he earned his doctorate in 1927 with a thesis on quantum mechanics. It was finished three weeks after he had enrolled. In 1929, he joined the physics faculties of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena and the University of California in Berkeley.

His interests ranged far and wide. He was



Associated Press

Physics with poetic flair

Sophocles early. At Harvard he found Dante and pored over French literature. The scope of his erudition is enormous. He knows art and he knows music. He was an enormously popular teacher with a wide influence on his students.

He came by his interests in physics early.

Once, it is recalled, he made an infrequent trip to the playground as a third or fourth grader. A child threw a ball out of the playground and the director criticized throw. But young Robert calculated the force with which the ball struck the sidewalk and demonstrated that it could not have hurt anyone.

A Scholar's 'Paradise'

Harvard herecalls as an intellectual paradise.

"I loved it," he said later. "I almost came alive. I took more courses than I was supposed to, lived in the stacks, just raided the place intellectually."

In his teaching days in California, Dr. Oppenheimer stuck to the academic life. He recalls that he had no radio, no telephone, and he never read a newspaper or a current magazine. His friends were faculty people from Pasadena and Berkeley—scientists, classicists and artists.

"I was interested in man and his experience," Dr. Oppenheimer said later. "I was deeply interested in my science, but I had no understanding of the relations of man to his society."

In 1940 he married Katherine Puening. The Oppenheimers had two children,

E.C. PRIZE GOING TO OPPENHEIMER

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 1963.

Fermi Award Signals Move to Annual Security Ban

By JOHN W. FINNEY Special to The New York Times WASHINGTON, April 4. Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, the nuclear physicist who was declared security risk by the Atomic Energy Commission in 1954, has been chosen to receive the highest honor the commission confers.

The decision to present Dr. Oppenheimer with the \$50,000 Fermi Award for 1963 is expected to be announced by the White House tomorrow. Officially, Dr. Oppenheimer will receive the award for his contributions to the development of nuclear energy. These include his work in developing the atomic bomb during World War II and in promoting the military and peaceful uses of the atom.

Particularly within the Kennedy Administration, there was reaction to the award somewhat akin to several years ago by the Oppenheimer case. The decision to give the award to Dr. Oppenheimer comes as a symbolic action to "clear the name" of the scientist who led the Manhattan Project. Ten years later he was declared a security risk by the Government.

data" pending a security review. A three-man panel, headed by Gordon Gray, then president of the University of North Carolina, was set up to review the charges. Dr. Oppenheimer had been accused of associating with Communists before and during World War II, of hiring Communists and ex-Communists at the Los Alamos Laboratory, of aiding and contributing to Communist causes and of actively opposing the hydrogen bomb project after it had been ordered by President Truman.

The panel's recommendation was upheld later that month by the commission, which announced on June 29 that it had voted 4 to 1, against granting security clearance to Dr. Oppenheimer. In the majority were Lewis L. Strauss, the commission chairman, Eugene M. Zuckert, now Secretary of the Air Force, Joseph Campbell, now Comptroller General, and the late Thomas E. Murray.

The lone dissenter was Dr. Henry D. Smyth, now the United States representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency. The majority opinion, signed by Messrs. Strauss, Zuckert and Campbell, held that Dr. Oppenheimer was a security risk on the basis of "fundamental defects in his character" and "because his associations with persons known to him to be Communists have extended far beyond the tolerable limits of prudence and self-restraint."

In a separate opinion, Mr. Murray went beyond the majority and questioned Dr. Oppenheimer's loyalty. In his dissent, Dr. Smyth maintained that Dr. Oppenheimer's "loyalty and trustworthiness emerge clearly from his record of Government service and that there was no reason to believe that he 'has ever divulged any secret information.'"

The move to reverse the security decision against Dr. Oppenheimer or to take some step to "clear his name" began within the Government when Dr. Strauss left the commission. When his successor, John A. McCone, now director of the Central Intelligence Agency, was named commission chairman in June, 1958, Senator Clinton F. Anderson, then chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, asked him to review the Oppenheimer case.

As a result, Loren K. Olson then general counsel of the commission, made a detailed review of the case. As he recalled recently, Mr. Olson concluded that it was "a messy record from a legal standpoint, that the charges kept shifting at each level of the proceedings, that the evidence was stale and consisted of information that was 12 years old and was known when a security clearance was granted during World War II and that it was a punitive, personal abuse of the political system."

When Mr. Olson was promoted to the commission in May, 1960, he began trying to restore Dr. Oppenheimer's clearance. He proposed that the commission's records division went out and interviewed the scientists and the Communist mission grant and a security clearance.

A change of climate in the commission was reinforced by the appointment of Dr. Robert S. Serber, a biologist who had worked with Dr. Oppenheimer on the Manhattan Project early in 1961. An important impetus to commission action came from the Federation of American Scientists, a political action committee created by a group of scientists in 1946. In October, 1961, the federation wrote a letter to the commission urging a complete review of the Oppenheimer case.

During the discussion in March, Mr. Olson asked whether a letter from the federation would be sent to the commission. This brought the Oppenheimer case up for discussion on the commission. Mr. Serber, then, approached Mr. Oppenheimer and asked whether he would accept a new security investigation. Such a report would be laid before the commission and the commission would grant clearance and "that's all there would be to it."

Nothing positive resulted from this commission discussion. Action seemingly was put off on the common agreement that the question went beyond the commission's scope. Behind the scenes, however, the scientist members of the commission continued to discuss action to vindicate Dr. Oppenheimer. There were also continuing efforts by outside groups.

As a Senator and as a presidential candidate, Mr. Kennedy had not taken a position on the Oppenheimer case but the prevailing belief was that the new Administration would look more kindly on opposing Oppenheimer's name than had its predecessor. This belief was reinforced by the appointment of Dr. Robert S. Serber, a biologist who had worked with Dr. Oppenheimer on the Manhattan Project early in 1961.

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the case. From the back row, Mr. Madsen was reported to have objected that the commission could not take such a position in effect, it would be endorsing the position taken during the Eisenhower Administration.

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Oppenheimer Selected To Get Fermi Award

By Howard Simon
Staff Reporter

J. Robert Oppenheimer, controversial atomic scientist, has been selected to receive the \$50,000 Fermi Award—the Atomic Energy Commission's highest honor, it was learned last night.

Oppenheimer, who lost the right to do secret work for the Government in a celebrated security case in 1954, was picked unanimously for the award by the AEC's 9-member General Advisory Committee, a group of eminent American scientists. The award was endorsed, again unanimously, by the present Atomic Energy Commission and was approved by President Kennedy.

The Fermi award, which is given for "especially meritorious contribution to the development, use or control of atomic energy," goes to Oppenheimer for his contributions, to theoretical nuclear physics and for his leadership in developing both the atomic bomb and peaceful applications of atomic energy.

Oppenheimer's selection will be viewed by many as representing a desire by the present Administration to redress what some consider a previous wrong.

It also has led to speculation that Oppenheimer might be requested to do secret work for the Government, which would automatically make him a candidate for new security clearance. The award itself does not reinstate Oppenheimer's security clearance.

The wartime scientific director of the Nation's Manhattan Project for building the first atomic bomb lost his clearance after a lengthy and acrimonious hearing to determine whether he was a security risk.

Essentially Oppenheimer's judgment as regards security was called into question because of his association with French scientist Haakon

Chevalier, a Communist. But questions were raised about his opposition to the development of the hydrogen bomb and about his loyalty.

The general debate resulting from the questions split the scientific community and the words "I have not been totally honest"

The AEC denied security clearance to Oppenheimer by a 4 to 1 vote in 1954. Three of the four AEC commissioners — Chairman Lewis L. Strauss, Eugene M. Zuckert

and Joseph Kampel — based their decision on the conclusion that Oppenheimer had shown "fundamental defects" of character, and "wilful disregard" of security obligations. The fourth majority member was Commissioner Thomas F. Murray.

Commissioner Henry D. Smyth voted for Oppenheimer, declaring that "he is completely loyal."

The Oppenheimer decision landed in the AEC's lap in 1954 after President Eisenhower had suspended Oppenheimer's clearance pending review of charges against the scientist.

A special three-member board concluded unanimously in May, 1954, that Oppenheimer was a loyal citizen but it voted 2 to 1 against restoring his security clearance. The AEC's decision followed in June.

Informed sources yesterday said that Strauss, along with other former AEC chairmen and members of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, had been informed of the decision to give "Op. O." as he is known in the scientific community, the award.

The first hint that the Administration might approve honoring Oppenheimer came last year when he was invited to a dinner at the White House for Nobel Prize winners.

Oppenheimer is not a Nobel Prize winner. After 1947 he has been director of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University.

Previous winners of the award, named for the late Enrico Fermi, pioneer atomic scientist, include John von Neuman, E. O. Lawrence, Eugene Wigner, Glenn T. Seaborg, former chairman of the AEC, Hans Bethe and Edward Teller.

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MEMORANDUM OF CALL

Date 13 May Time _____

TO- Jensen

YOU WERE CALLED BY- YOU WERE VISITED BY-

Burtha

TELEPHONE: _____ Number or code _____ Extension _____

- PLEASE CALL
- WILL CALL AGAIN
- RETURNING YOUR CALL
- IS REFERRED TO YOU BY:
- WAITING TO SEE YOU
- WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

LEFT THIS MESSAGE: She talked to
Lita this morning and
she confirmed the fact
that the DCT ~~was~~ not
going to nominate anyone for
the House case

Received By: J. A. C.